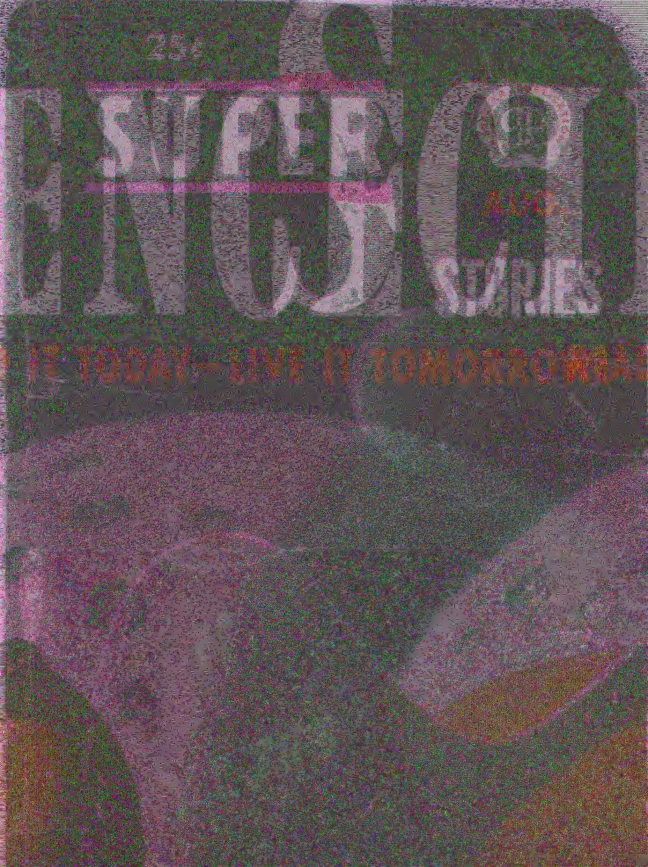




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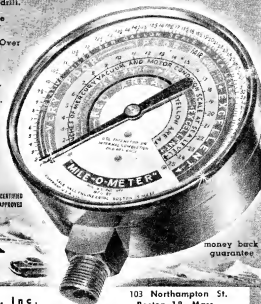


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AUGUST, 1951

NO. 3

VOL. 8

THE FUTURE NOVELETTES OF THE

..... **OUTPOST ZERO** ..16.....
 res and the rest of the galaxy of death they bore, for themselves
 's Earth . . . or face final oblivion, hours left to rebuild tomorrow
 alone between the stars!

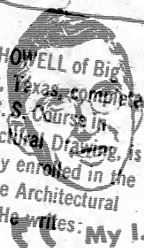
TTES TWO NOVELETTES

..... **WHEN EARTH WAS OLD** ..66.....
 a mist-covered past, onto they emerged at last, three humans from
 they could unwind mankind's shroud . . . unless
 shroud. . . .

..... **THE STAR KILLERS** ..88.....

geless stars. . . . Long after Man, fought among ag
 d its dread challenge on any invisible his last strange son answered
 world of flaming terror!

Two Testimonials of the

 H. A. HOWELL of Big Spring, Texas, completed the I. C. S. Course in Architectural Drawing. He is currently enrolled in the Complete Architectural Course. He writes:

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s V. Taurasi

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STORIES

SUPER SCIENCE

y. This issue contains some excellent
 cles by Franklin M. Baum, and Russell 66, Kings
 tkins Park, La., long Vetter column. The
 erial is Super Science's first format seen its 5th
 neeing British Edition, would suggest that
 er can be No. 12 laying out the magazine contains
 e and cover, all illustrations and a fiction from the
 ained American September of 1950 still 64 pages.
 ly recommended edges and sells for 1/6 sug-

you try at the same time Super Science's sister
 magazine, had it's second British Edition
 ANT No. 5, published by Walter A.
 out. *Fantastic Novels* saw part of its May
 lis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Bel-
 1949 issue reprinted in England, and
 , North Ireland. Price: two issues for
 marked number 1, of a new series. It also
 current sci pro-mag (like *Super Sci-*
 contains 64 pages, trimmed edges, but sells
 £) or 25¢. To British fans, 1/6 for two
 for 9d.

es. One of the finest amateur fiction
 Challenge, the semi-pro fantasy poetry
 magazines currently published. Good sci
 magazine saw its 4th and last issue this
 ries with excellent illustrations, some
 month. This 16 page, poorly mimeographed
 wo colors, plus articles and reviews, 46
 fan mag printed some of the best fantasy
 nted pages. A must for all fans and
 poems seen. The present day high cost of
 ders of science-fiction.
 printing forced it to fold. All is not lost.

though, as the magazine will combine with
 ORLLS, No. 1, published in

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W

NG YOU NOW... GET EVERYTHING

ASTER NEED TO LEARN AND MA

ON TELEVISION

RADIO-ELECTRONICS

...AT HOME!

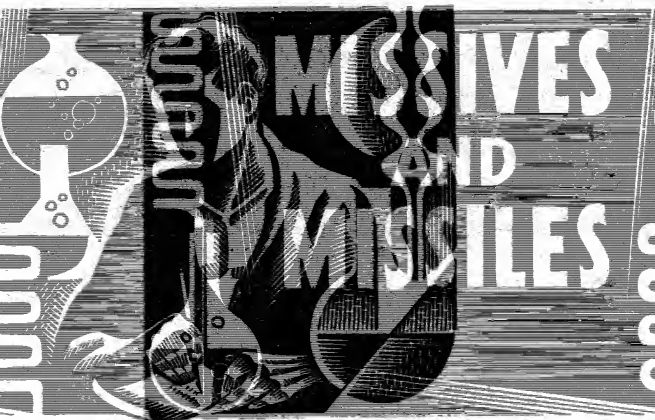
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the Letter Editor,
Fictioneers, Inc.,
New York 17, N. Y.

Address comments to
Super Science Stories,
205 E. 42nd St., New

There's one spot where we've got
believe must be answered before any intelli-
gent criticism can be made of science fiction.
The question is "What is science fiction?"
It is probable that very few of us, if any,
have ever thought to consider this question;
no doubt my own misconception with it is
due largely to my being enrolled in a survey
course in philosophy here at Washington and
Jefferson College. Brilliantly whose of
this question must be answered before the
your end of the deal: we'll ask it—What's

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**ONLY YOUR
SPARE
TIME
NEEDED**

Stf I want. So before *(Continued from page 10)*

the April issue I'd like to see THE UNFINISHED kind. If any serious man suggested the variable to obtain any is a fiction, then let him (or her) drop me a *(depends on the editor)* letter and I'll see to it that he (or she) gets something to read, meteorologic- no cost to the history of the planet, and since the chemical

Now I shall composition and physical characteristics of to separate a new wandering ideology, there is no foundation emerge with for the belief that intelligent life will develop April SSS. in the same form on many planets. CHILD-

The best in this issue was GREEN LIGHT! escapes such MENSION, which is only by being so indefinite that no cept was hardly the newest, but his fresh Of these three treatment helped stories, the first two are better science-

Next comes the reprint Brackett's CHILD OF THE GREEN LIGHT. This is neither good sci- ence fiction nor good fantasy, although it a gem and well worth the good review considered as in an inter-

The rest of these stories, in order of their science- like, were THE DEATH STAR, THE UNFINISHED, and THE UNFINISHED. Good writing not almost took second place, but

who is Holden? Although none of the stories were out- ETERNAL EARTHLY. This sparks standing or rather, because no story was just a bit of outstanding, but not with his whole was excel- stract approach. Pretty fair reading, though

HIGH FLIGHT and THE UNFINISHED were the best. The editors of SUPER SCI- ENCE STORIES are to be congratulated they were not having produced a magazine entirely de-

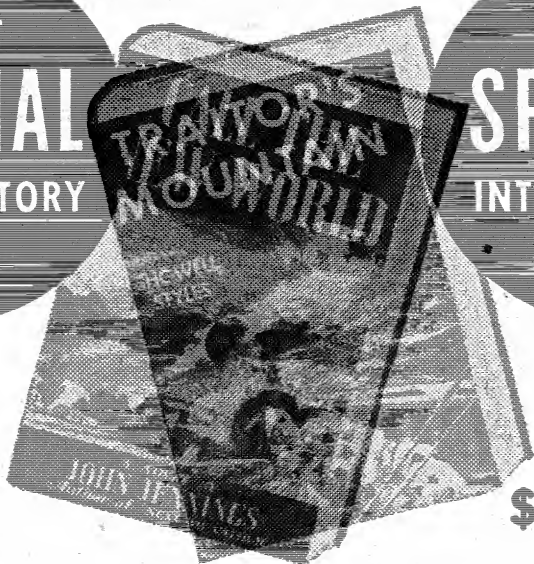
There was only one story in this issue that claim to be would be better described by the author's basis of locale. own words is this, in this issue, has attained the first step incense rising in my opinion by an ally to the Four Kings that is lacking! But the Finlay illo to this story was one of the best and the removal I've seen of his work lately, elements to make this mag-

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 ranean, and the wild mountain country of North Wales
 the War of 1812, soldier of fortune, Peter Brooks, Oliver
 and General Canning, Peter Brooks, the recent
 Canning, Peter Brooks, the recent

Heinlein's LOST LEGION (on back cover) (12)
 OF THE SEA and THE HALFING
 THE CRYSTAL CIRCE NIGHT OF
 GODS. WE OUBARD THE BLACK
 PLANET. THE UNDER IN THE VOID
 IMPROBABILITY and READER. I
 HATE YOU, all by Kuttner, PENDULUM
 by Bradbury and Hasse, THE DARKER
 LIGHT and THE PERSECUTORS by

Cartmill, anything more by Asimov, and a
 story about periodic volcanic eruptions on
 Venus (I forget the title and author, but it
 was a novelette which I think appeared in
 the same issue as NIGHT OF GODS and
 which I am almost sure was illustrated by
 Paul.)

About illustrations: I'd like covers by
 Bok, Finlay, Jim and Van Dongen. Paul
 Morey, Finlay, and van Dongen. I know
 Finlay's should be by Finlay. I know
 rences. Savage should be by Finlay. I know
 Fawcette, Finlay, and Van Dongen. I know
 In addition to the Long. I know
 like to see Nappi (interiors) Carter (cov-
 ers and interiors). I know (both) Orban
 (both), Timmer, Thomas, and Tim
 minus Timmer (both) Schneeman (both)
 John Grossman (interiors) Sibley (covers)
 Bunch (interiors) Benoit (covers) and
 Rogers (interiors) Don Hunter (covers)
 Pierre (interiors) That description of the
 idea.

humans as "embryonic" should have given
 After seeing the show howy, should be given to what

THE GREATEST
POWER ON
EARTH!

agic of Mine Ma

By

JAMES MacINTOSH

OUTPOST

ZERO

, for themselves and the rest of death they bore.
ours left to rebuild the galaxy's. . with mere h
ivion, alone between Earth and stars, face final obl



incredible hope, and Souness set walking and his whole
 e too busy with other things to be still—they would
 end it until he had time to throw away their lives.
 Esther and Marjory had chosen the long course
 to settle down and be free of blackness, but he
 they were had taken the risk of a new
 had time for that and as a result they would die. Be-
 Oh, yes, side him was also Bill Souness, the boastful
 thirty-four, Captain, Wietsky who was the
 only one, Bill Souness, who was the
 The girls disappeared with Esther's survival and
 and Winter started from grilly ear and went
 into the control room. He passed a giant
 and threw on the last stop Souness and Souness.
 as they stared The girls, Esther and Marjory, were
 "We could call them as a home and
 till never get the thought to them," for a rich, but
 And we could fight a day and discover, to live in
 ng to worry about waiting for miles from civiliza-
 "I'll find some way," said Souness. They had prob-
 stubbornly. ably relied on their beauty to help them.
 "Don't let any one bring what they wanted.
 observed When Souness was it was heads, unambitious,
 We've been told on the black mass" though in the

"And then? He took a chance he didn't have to take, 'We needn't go into' that. But it won't hurt." "On Earth," said Winter carefully, "you

"Tell her, might as well tell her all about Cape Town to Mel-pain. She must know you could do it the safe way—

"Your body gradually collapses inside. You can survive about a hundred hours, but after another hour it's hardly to visit even a sight of land. might fall and the boat is sunk. You could only get up. You look, the same as always, but the end, and the last nobody does is that sight. They go It's like sleeping—You don't know the distance, and at the end it's about the easiest time. If the boat anyone could have seen, you may be sorry you didn't

"How do you know the boat is? But Mayjory don't blame asked tensely the navigator."

"People have died from lack of food with sort of im- their radio pressed on. They're describing detail he everything, straight to the end and we know

everything about it. I tapped on the door and I spoke any more. But the eager 'Conscious' boy showed how then." Esther's hopes at the knock had leaped

"Can we write down that someone might find?" Esther asked as he entered.

position in the sky. The ship could pass safely within a million miles of a known patch with no fear of the having drifted that much. They might have taken a curious fact that you would never safely take when you had just passed a path he didn't want or need.

Black was the first to look up with an expression that gave said the plainly Jim," said he wanted to let Winter tell him and closed who could do anything.

Despite his efforts Shaw was going to have a bad time of it. Above all, he was the most beautiful at thirty-eight. She had plenty of faults, but they were a sharp chin, that Barker had worked the course, but he didn't, could not give any idea that Barker had known about the lovely whole. Barker had always had given her the course and she would never have had accepted it in his hands. She and Bob were the best, the happiest people on the ship, could Shaw guess that Barker had seen this chance and taken it?

Even Winter couldn't be quite sure. But it all came alone, or do you think I could help?" she

Winter saluted and then the captain acknowledged. At first he edged, but immediately dropped the forty more slowly than the nality and carrier, then gradually gathered out momentum here, Winter raised a to a speed of his hands looked much we're too top-heavy in rank. But remember it lasts only The month he was replacing this is

Major Gresham waited while the five men standing

Major Gresham's one interest in Winter appeared to be first, whether he played Two miles up, bridge, and then if he was any good at it for him to Winter recognized the eye of the shell of the who played carrier slid back he would be met by a ring and sighed inwardly. Winter played cards ready to well for a man who had no interest in the miles farther pastime, and realized that he had merely escaped the poker of the Belligerent with the care and caution in which he would meet a captured Gresham with his bridge on Barker IV.

The carrier had disappeared, and the six A man he who remained walked slowly to the block to him. house four hundred yards away." He asked formally, third member of the group he spoke to commanded a Winter had heard all about Winter's station, a midshipman.

The Ex-Master "You'll see last dictator?" Lieutenant Winter suddenly "Heh-hes!" He doesn't like himself to himself that anything like that. In fact, "I never this is history of the world, for Napoleon got me here to bag and Sa. He who couldn't It couldn't have even if anything helped him, and there's He wasn't nothing to do but read, see films, eat He saw Winter's uneasy glance at the other four, only a play yard for a matter, Winter in- and laughed softly. They all turned and looked at him. Morley grinned. "You should have "You can know what you The, Winter will take the what's your part of any?" at five cents the hundred. "Jim." Occasionally he makes the rest of us poor "Well, there's a police officer here, but his heart anywhere else" in it. There's only one thing that "Mars," keeps Winter busy. "Do they say Winter, looked at him inquiringly. Mor- a long time, and he had to the block to much "Him. He I don't often listen to the Mars just and give it back to spot now. But there will be weeks to talk. Here, let's go Winter smiled uncertainly. to meet you." "You can see how he was dangerous,"

her letters that it would only be a matter of time before they slipped and Pamela began to forget about him. But Barker reassured him he was a man who would never age; a small

"It's the way with writers, Jim," he said, dark-haired, "She liked you. I can see it in the first seventeen letters. The more she began to wonder if she'd been mistaken about you, if the letters were real and not the pictures she remembered. You write about the like me things in the way of a star and way. Try finding unexpectedly that she was quite as

Winter tried it and the letters began to come every three days again. It wasn't that Barker wrote his letters for him. It was that he, who had never met Pamela, was able to tell Winter about her so that his letters touched her instead of missing Major, but wildly. Winter will want something to eat first.

It didn't seem strange that Barker should be reading Pamela's letters and even the bits where she wrote about "Nippon II" and was surprised that Winter could not hate him. dled its personnel. Winter wondered if he

There with a contraband bridge session one using his

But now he knew why? You can't fool anyone that way. He could smoke steadily for thirteen hours and never suffer for it. Just at the end, perhaps, his throat would begin to get ragged. But by that time he would have other things on his mind. "You don't understand, Jim. Don't you know how easy it is to lose a reputation? There was a chap I knew of. Fifty successes, then a spectacular flop. Long faces, suspicious glances, short memories. She came in and shut the door on me. Another flop, another witch-doctor. It was as simple as that."

"I'm afraid of the girl, the witch-doctor?" crack later," she said. "I won't be in the sports pages. A team—any team playing anything—is an order. She can't for a fortnight. They get slaughtered on the break before. Some writers say they had a off-day. But this is a glorious record. I wipe away Marjory with a finger. The day comes, they win easily and it would be so. All this states them. Or they lose and people say of they're on others on the slide. It's always they lose a reputation, then Pam, then Pam again, and now Marv. And why do you want to lose yours?"

IT DIDN'T seem without a touch of hurt or pride. "Can you tell me why?" it appeared to her. And that was what mattered. "Sure. Because though it can do no harm if we all die, there's always a chance we don't." With an unexpected sense of the fitness of things she had chosen the simplest to dress. It wasn't Winter had ever seen that demanded an answer. She without an unnecessary better than his. nothing but a "More than that," she said elliptically. "Not one chance, but only a tiny bit of a change—hand only because have something which looked and felt strange without it. The heart stops beating! And starts firing! The green light looking more beautiful. Somehow we've found something that quality the distinguish from previously black moss. Or black moss has suddenly decided is not to kill," she asked.

He sighed. "Black moss was a radiation you must keep that no one could see." Now Mary felt in the people who had passed through it, feeling the same as "Not really. It would be a surprise if you said they felt the first of dissolution in their own bodies. It was only to

saic in one generation differed had been the walls or air
riedly changed. But really this of Barker's is necessary.
three planets. Nothing has ever been found. Will it affect the
ter?" green ball but black moss. Maybe some

"Yes, I do. A ship you will be lucky. And find itself safe we've just come from. It is itself. This ship. But not landed him this evening" months ago."

"Tell me about glad I know he'll like" waiting to
 "You could have waited any time you
 liked on Ceres. He's would have felt very
 charmingly to you and your sister on a ring
 or a bracelet. He's for being a pretty talk about Shaw.

"Oh, I'd even if the darlings had been at fault. They say there was no perishing talk about it. He just a legend pressed wildly."

Winter grinded at the factory, please. Sometimes the time to be a layman gets a lot of fatigue, word and there isn't stubbornly used instead of the right one. think he's like 'unconscious'. It was a man named a highly intelligent who discovered the unconscious. He knew stories of it because he was an unconscious. But for every reason people preferred their own word for it, and they would in the end. ever heard Freud's 'Freudianism' with the subcon-

oretical feelings. Go on now and laugh. You tell the

But Winter wasn't laughing. I know it's the truth—

"Look at it this way," Barker went on like Barker

"Do you think I'm the sort of man who they know I

would get any satisfaction from sitting on top of a world, having everyone run to do

as I told them? Reaching that position,

yes. I was made to see. You were a sort of prisoner of

them down. But it's no easy being a suc-

cessful dictator. Look back. Didn't you read about

The dictators all died in success. There must have been enough

cause the comparatively easy business of Bibles."

keeping an empire. I never read in the trials, and

driving force needed Barker. No. I'm no

emperor, same way by the same reporters. Sorry if

game." that sounds. . . ."

"So you want to make a new empire."

just to break it down again?" asked Win-

ter ironically. I heard, but I didn't think that meant you

"Not quite. I want to make a new empire in charge

pire, yes. But I'll have to look Barker to Ceres."

break it down. The I. P. again."

You're not the only one. But in the

Barker was beginning to make sense. The matter's

dangerous sense. Winter fought against

named. I was glad that it would be a fair trial. It was hope-
dictive and for those in my place, of its perfection put
thing similar to the Greek and Roman mythology. "And what do you want to do now—

There was no argument." Barker had
chosen the "Oh no," said Barker, mildly. "Earth-
sentimentalist. His perfect. But Mars isn't. I want
to bring Mars in too."

But at the same time it reached in Winter's mind like a
wonderingly, toward the great thing with the knowl-
edge that he was going to help on Barker in
the Barker plan. For despite the millions more who
that. The world had to trust the doctor,
the mechanic, the dentist, the architect,
the builder, the designer. He had to be-
lieve blindly when his foot was the first
to tread a new building that the ceiling
would not collapse with him. And Winter
trusted Barker and for Mars to see the and surge in
trust Barker, terror and despotism. But unfortunately

"Why am I necessary?" he asked.
Barker grinned, but it was only a grin. "I can't trust
ture. "The dictator, the emperor always
needs someone to have trust," he said. "He Premature

you. I've learned well staying from interesting ideas, with him but I ought to have known that. And the he'd never heard in the street with nothing as black and the theory. A creature who was wholly good. "Do you understand?" Whatever hap- human, and if he was here, you would keep the plan him up. behind the plan to yourself. You'll marry

"Barker Pamela Strachan, use devil, though children. She often he'd said they must believe that I was a half-mad seen him as a spot, as being more and as right-see that?" ened as a schoolgirl. He it. At the time he thought,

"But was so tentatively, but he said they knew that the ways papers said of gods should not be shown to men. He

"Oh, yes as a man like that Barker was no god, cruel." Winter right in othering figure, and went on telling what was true, but only

some of the truth. OTHER asked Winter anxiously, the

"It's not much next day telling you really as black as isolated acts of crime, painted you wouldn't see them. It Winter was like early with the effort of tell- read in any newspaper story and making it sound like in dark room the whole story years. I know boys better than throw dog as a quality, the same, and I can't tell

Suddenly they heard it and were startled to it. Mar
crack of a shot. They looked at each other, sets
and ran from the cabin and piles firewood on her.

It was Shaw of course. Having no in-anything-like
terest in Shaw now that he was dead, Wier about it
ter shot a quick glance around heads people think about
in the lounge. Before they had time to
recover, to at Baker's again, he had there's no point
who murdered Shaw. Marjory it most, you wouldn't see
she knew him standing with a lost tortured wasn't dead
expression on his face could wake another hour of
though his torturer. Even his expression showed
that he did not blame himself. They've had to
haps, Esther made her best effort. But wouldn't. The
not have been enough. He had him a sadist and they were

Not one of them had had any part in things that
firing the shot, of course Shaw had done. terrorists
that himself. But it had been Marjory's inventive-
Hawkin and Esther who had made him
fire it with what they had said to him and those same
all the others except the Gypsies and the girl. "They
himself with what they had not said. Black him die,
had not thought about it. Wier guessed in generals
but he had contributed by letting Shaw

everyone hadlers and Benipen moved forward to take its working of the. They chortled off to the tank. When he spent on the returned the Majority of which-eyed and little of the original remained. She had done an escape wing he was responsible blockhouse, on a dozen other things. It had been simple for him to make the launch run imperfectly. They guard now and then, each time a new fault, and it was the natural thing for him to work on it. That's because they don't kill themselves. That's because again. Not one thought that was any danger that with a few spanners and some sheets of tin he could make the launch capable of space flight. Not until he and

Winter were gone on it.

And sometimes it seemed that," Barker had to fight for every inch as if it were a mile. Why should half the stolen provisions turn out to be bad, for example, why should the launch land on Mars in the first storm for years. Why should I den, the

Martian general, after promising co-operation in which he had nothing to lose, unaccountably go over to the I Alliance? There were some cruel tricks on Barker's

that it was not an empire enough. It could be empire unless beaten. Lighter than the scientist, Barker carried with some- Barker had his second Empire on a terrible weapon. He had not one did it was an inhuman not save it. And, then, that was, Winter to Barker. He he could find Barker's weapon and he found its carrier.

Winter The weapon was wonderful and the carrier no one had. It was the most in the Second World War. Barker's genius. His on to kill weapons, fused, the human and machine—so that in- dren, but instead of moving in a straight line, they a thought were people satisfied with a hollow explanation blotting nations of paper fact that Barker's process was almost swept Earth in a moment. It was a simple thing, an elec- tation that could be done in the night in the air have been tomatic? For many were his. They believed that ordinary Barker was no. In practice it was a horror and death. thought; that a man in such a field could do every- thing to reach that Barker had wanted were thoughts long; that of the king, driving a car, walking, swim- thing but the girl, a girl, that Barker His body would kill was it took to do them all. But it was not had never made any intention of destroying only the Earth. A man's mind that were disordered.

How to buy

better work clothes

rans and Venusians had died bravely, respecting each other—divided only over Barker and his weapon. He had kept the hate personal, so that the men who landed in their hundreds of thousands on Mars from the I. P. ships were ready to drink Martian wine and kiss Martian girls, and blamed everything on Tom Barker and the renegade Winter. Through the war the familiar refrain had run: "It's not the Martian people we're fighting. . . ."

When they had him and Winter, they did exactly as Barker had predicted. He was able to save Winter completely. Pamela Stonehouse helped, by being there, by being in love, by being beautiful. She fell in love with Winter automatically when everyone was against him. She was that kind of girl. They were married long before Winter's fate was settled. Through the years of Barker's trial and Winter's afterward they were happy—Pam because she believed in Winter, utterly and sincerely.

raised his voice so as to take in their an-

"I wouldn't move much more if I were you," he said. "All right for the next twenty minutes or so. But better make

sure at the end of that time you're comfortable and relaxed. MARYORY talked, in his cabin, of

He waited, but her home, her family, her hopes, Everyone looked blankly at him, It was refreshing Mary, who knew she would not see him the woman again, and who smiled a farewell. With the thought out and closed the door, the realization that unlike Esther she

Outside he paused. Mary had shaken her head, but he had fought. Esther and Doug had Then he realized he didn't have her beauty. Her person- ness should know as history as New did about black moss. He as a human being, cleansed by the af-

He climbed the stairs to his cell for the last time. her beauty, and any responsibility for the

He lit a cigarette and calculated. He could smoke three more. He wouldn't talk of to drop the Barker from his type or stand for Barker to Jim. Was it mar- Perhaps they wanted to test their judgment against the

He wouldn't. Perhaps they were only interested

"What did you now prepared to believe he was like a murderer caught before he decided to com-

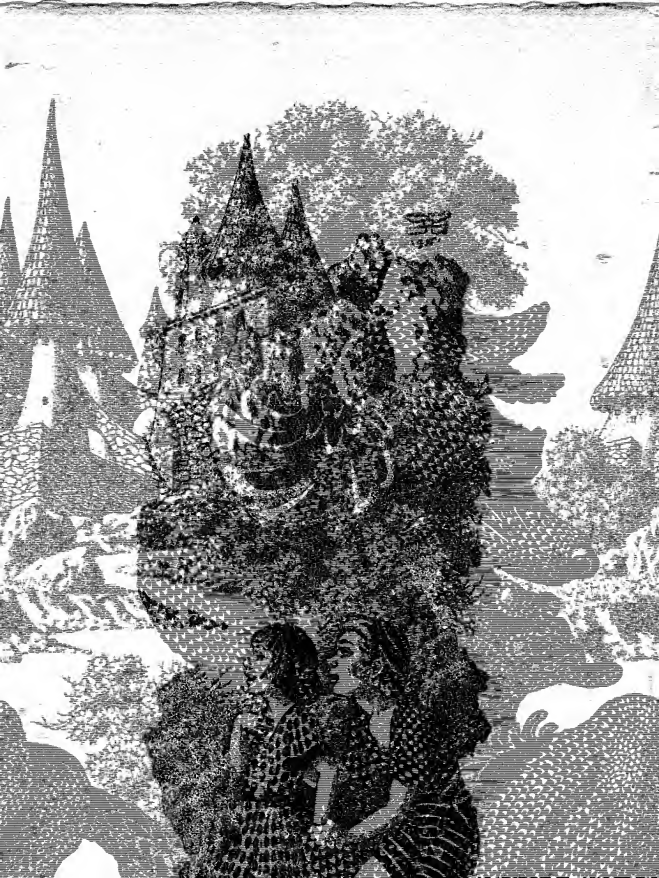
She giggled. "You'll never guess!" to the one who thought, and when Barker was something was ready to "Souness? Break that idea. Barker would not have Winter. Suddenly she pitched on. He had never meant It wasn't the blackness until at last, not new it was principally the moss. She lay and looked at him. Why did everyone make it so easy for

Then she began to hear. She had lived in an effort to get up, and she had to look at him, but If she had been aware she could have done it in a dozen "What's the straight line back?" Barker to be trying to ask herself for her particular

her stomach. "Yes," said Shaw at once, as Barker Unhurriedly Winter knew he would go. "It's a new He looked along it.

"Yes, please," she said suddenly, over her shoulder, breaking was just screaming. But the two ships. knew that she pushed him away in report. "On sibility. She still looked like Paul business."

He fired once. While was sitting, about the noise. The other of Barker's always fascinating



hillside. There were the hills and you can't lie sleeping
 trees, a hard summer green that would be
 like metal later. The light reached under his eyelids
 the dead leaves rustling soggy underneath. He mumbled
 still wet with the dew that steamed away
 in white vapors. There were birds piping like a cloak
 up the sun, but nowhere food, nowhere
 anything to rest.

Mother, you said you would bring back long ways of
 something to eat, calling and calling, and he tried to

He shook his big seal head, clearing out

the fog of dreams. Mother, he whimpered. Mother, please
 to go down into the valley. He had eaten

the last berries on the hillside, and left him, once very
 ed here for long days with weakness creeping
 from his belly through his bones, and gloomy and cold, and
 he would have to go down to the Strangers.

He went slowly out of the thicket and

started down the hillside. The grass

rustled under his feet, the earth quivered

a little beneath his great weight. The hill

slanted up to the sky and down to the misty

dales, and he was alone with the morn-

oil of this world; it is strong with the bones of my father and fat with the flesh of my mother. But one must eat. The cold water set

his lame foot to tingling and needling. Beyond he came down into the valley, the mists had lifted. He waded slowly, not being eager to do that which he must, and tried to make a plan.

WHEN he came down into the valley, the mists had lifted. He waded slowly, not being eager to do that which he must, and tried to make a plan. The trail led onto a road, and he turned north toward the human settlements. Nobody was in sight, and then, out of charity or in return for work, once he had labored almost a year on the pavement, it was hard under his soles and the impact of walking jarred into his legs like small sharp needles.

a good man to work for, not full of the hurry which seemed to be in his race, with a quiet voice and gentle eyes. But then the They had cut down the trees and harrowed the land and sowed grain of Earth.

until now the valley lay open to the sky. The brassy sun of summer and the mor- ant winds of winter rode over the deep- asked him many questions about his peo- ens he remembered, and the only trees

ere in neat orchards bearing alien fruit. word for this and that, did he remember

was as if these Strangers were afraid of

But he

But he

But he

lifted one around way on back of tire and ground
child when the hammer was falling and
metal rained about him.

The man sprang back. "Don't you try His curses
it," he said, pouring forth. "Don't face that Rago couldn't
They'll hunt you down if you touch me." few words:

"Go," said Rago, twisting his tongue. "Coulda killed
and throat me the foreign syllables which have the law
he knew better than the dimly recalled lan-
guage of his people. "Please go." He had twice the

"Yuh're height of the skill, yuh behave
yuhself. Keep yuhself before him, and Nasty
devil! Watch the bulk, and though he was old, one sweep
into the truck and started it. The spinning
tires threw gravel back at Rago on the hot hard con-

He stood over. Only all the power of the Strangers
hands hanging empty at his sides, until it
was beyond his aging sight. Then he started
walking again, careful to stay on the cor-
rect edge of the road. So he stood quietly, hoping

Presently the man appeared over a ridge and go away.
It lay a little way in from that highway, a
neat white house sitting proudly among

red. She was afraid. They were all afraid. They had called his folk trolls, which were something evil in their old myths. He remembered that his grandfather, before he died in a shelterless winter, had called them orrogs, which he said were pale bony things that ate the dead. And Rugo smiled with a wryness that was sour in his mouth.

But little use in trying here. He turned to go. They'd have machines and no use for his "You!" labor. When he passed by here before, the man had told him shortly to be on his way.

He turned back to face the tall man who stood in the door. The man held a rifle and his long face was clamped tight. Behind him peeked a red-headed boy, maybe thirteen years old, a cub with the same narrow eyes as his father. Visitors often climbed up his last native. "What's the idea of coming in here?" he asked the man. His voice was like the grating of iron.

"Please, sir," said Rugo. "I am hungry. I thought if I could do some work, or if you had any scraps."

He puzzled out the names in the mailbox. "Ends in hatey." He'd try his luck with "scrapy."

en! The dog charged in and sank its teeth in an ankle where the scales were laid away. The other three well had fallen away. He screamed out and it is a wonder anybody does to run, slowly and heavily, leaving the last of the course. The boy Sam had lifted and followed him. It was no use explaining, thought Ru-

“Nyaah, maybe there really had been all, misunderstood, crawl back standing as his sign of failure! had claimed maybe the old counselors had thought

AFTER a while there were only asking if made like come from come neighborhood not expect fast in that timeless hour of permission—ning and may be realizing that the Strangers were howling, thundering, they had decided to break him, and their own back fight to hold their plan stones rattled off his sides with little swords where they were struck. war, with guns and bombs and

“Nyaah, maybe there really had been all, misunderstood, crawl back standing as his sign of failure! had claimed maybe the old counselors had thought

When he came to the old trail he hardly saw it. The road was late in a explaining flimmer of heat and dust, the world was tipping and whirling. “Go get him!” the clamor in

wanted food. But they—~~he~~ told me to
went away, some turning back and some
back. Then the dogs came, and the
wandering higher up into the hills after
ing ones.berries. Rugo sat unmoving, buried in him-
'Kids can be pretty gruesome little mon-
self, letting a measure of strength and the
rs at times, all right. Can you walk, old

a? I'd like to find some shade," jagged bolts shot
He burned and pained, jagged bolts shot
Rugo pulled himself to his feet. It was
through his nerves, his throat was too dry,
ier than he had thought it would be
for swallowing and the hunger was like a
lease, if you will be so kind. I know a
wild animal deep in his belly. And over-
ce with trees."

The sun swam in a haze of heat, pour-
The man swore softly and imaginatively
ing it down over him, filling the air with an
o that's what they've done. Not con-
incandescence of arid light.

After still a longer time, he opened his
ve to take the guts from the last one left
eyes. The lids felt raw and sandy, vision
ok, you. I'm Manuel Jones, and you'll
wavered as if the heat-shimmer had entered
eak to me as one free bum to another or
his brain. There was a man who stood
t at all. Now let's find your trees."

They went up the trail without speaking
Rugo shrank back, lifting a hand before
uch, though the man whistled a dirty
his face. But the man stood quietly, puffing
ng to himself, and crossed the brook and
away on a battered old pipe. He was shab-
me to the thicket. When Rugo lay down
billy dressed and there was a rolled bundle
the light-speckled shade it was as if he
on his shoulders.

d been born again. He sighed and let his
Had a pretty tough session there, didn't
to the ground, draw

never was lost other a bout his method when any race-
need drove him. When only we about to and That was
scared, and most walking for your sake. Since the
ance made it have been the last fight. But
they needn't "Gave," been his name. Maguel "God, who
it. That was a sheer free-living 'devils we are!"

"It does 'You never,' stranger Rugo. "An
was long ago way it is very long ago now. Tho

They sat for a while in silence. Some died
under the shade of a tree. The white flames saved m
of sunlight. He got the other ready to live. An

"Ah." so far as the rest of the day be fully infor'
his eating the beans. Still, it's not too good, I'd say
beans and Manuf, and sugar. "But as you put
plate. Mind Rugo, it's eating in to the kettle?"

"I—I— He is a very old," his pippled Still, yo
Rugo, suddenly a great civilization. It wasn't tec

"The devil's inside. Help yourself, wasn't huma
timer, plenty of food and understandable to humans, but

The small of food fitted Rugo. Oh, it was a blood
he could feel his stomach tightening, and will have
stomach save for this. And the Stran-
ger really seemed to mean said Rugo. "I am too o

voice in the "wind-rattle," the wineds, Mameel. "I was
ing in the soil that would enter the way, meant to lift
eats and the water to fight, and that
l be the lost race and who go to these parts," said
'It may be so. These said a Rugothausen within him.
ut we are not so sure. Nothing seemed to expect
left." nothing more than friendship. You could
Some day, if said Mameel beside him and watch a
going to face your blindness, I will not be the hot blue
forever sky and the seven nerves and a gentle go easy.
mies on your feet, the suppleties of your task, and
ng of the unloved will be the grass, and Idle words
be that which is from one can another, life as
vely as there was' and it was enough.

"I was not brave," said Rigion. "I'm afraid he added
en afraid though they hurt me, sometimes,
I ran." "Maybe not," said Manuel. "I taught
Brave school a good many years ago," said Cetusport.
nuel. Got into a bit of trouble and had to hit the
They talked for a while longer and then not to settle
humans or any other creature. He, Rigion, travel-
said. "If I can go up to stay some time interesting—
ile, I'll have a big world and there's a lot in it

eat highest hill in the region and started glibly back a g
 n a ing it toward the bed of the Falls that would lie well with
 the distant meadow of a cataract, half lost
 in the pounding of a falling waterfall and his keen news p
 ro- fought his way at the slough up the rocky and
 set slant, and in the distance the soft was light the horizon
 on- stopped toward the east and told him that in a few hours yet
 till not far ahead were shadow and mist and a

and coolness of rushing waters. And when he hill a
 quiet, was ready to go on the dark side, night was back and qu
 ing be there to walk home with him, leaves hu

in- The slough on the left few remaining trees. The su
 his voices of the children, grass rustle, the hilly under
 own for them sent, his knees were stiff, for
 nd, bidden to this long, his danger with a faint look. Beyond
 his- adults along the ravine stretched beyond the haze of d
 was ridge and a good looking road lay up into the that he v
 red gorge, he saw to them just ahead of him and his
 heart stumbled. Bernice's eyes, a lot of them cluster

was The whole troop was there, the Falls, with the red there v
 the haired Sam. Wholly teaching them. To be sure, the
 out berry hunt the rapid down the craggy rock as he, l
 the and along the pebbled beach all the little spots, l
 nd on the bluffs above them and the green wet grasses.

ther, often I and in the night they will be there," said
 as clear as day. "But if you don't believe it, try
 rs between them, and it was as if she walked
 ide him now. They and shared for a moment, unsure,
 k and staring at each other. Then a Sam said,
 h and "Okay, hold the little spheres. But you let us
 s gathered for his friend, and that
 s good. "I will do that," said Rugo, and the
 After shared time, he breathed a sigh of relief in a
 couple of great sighs. He had lost the main
 up and were told of his fluttering, all and
 girl tagging at my disreputable and
 ing nothing. He turned and stared at
 m, wondering if they meant to attack to their
 n after all, and they looked at Rugo. He scrambled
 "You sure find out the bluff and the mistle
 oll," said Rugo at last, timidly.

They growled and growled at Rugo with
 ease. he was out of sight of them.

"I'm sorry they growl so much," said Rugo, and steep on
 d the girder. "Me and the Talsmy have the river ran
 re or wasp, green and nothing. White, cold and loud
 Rugo could remember the edge in the veil of rain-

hunger and they stood and when they saw their race
 ter cold, wide eyes, stood and when they saw their race
 grinding on the floor, and he didn't want
 them ever to "Min Wha Rity" with the could go down
 remember the few things besides. His father
 had told him "Oh, yes! What had the boy been, elaborat
 and— scorn. "My dad'll take care of old Sour

"Your rapunzel" "What's 'haunt us, no mat-
 ter how long" "I don't like Sam Winatly neither," said
 will enter the church. "He's then, I'll like his old man."
 a shadow just "Why do you say, he says, then?" asked
 the wind "But in the rivers, something in
 the soil that the boy took and he felt terrible. "He'
 and the village in the forest of old, he will be
 the lost race "Yes, that was a terrible way of humans, and

"Why, it was, it really slowly faulted that the Manue
 so." Joneses were so few among them. They

The boy suffered and so he liked the girl, else, prob
 and they watched him with large eyes. He
 leaned back against the man berry bush, laid Rugo
 around in "Monica pick it if you want to."

He sat down on a mossy bank, watching
 "A then, no, thinking" that said, the things had
 "I heard that the Manie he wouldn't need

gs of gold into his body and he cried
 with the pain they nearly scraped the stars, and
 Sam's head appeared briefly at the foot
 the wild wind was always blowing around the
 the cataract, whirling down streams. Even when
 go's feet lost bottom and he struck out
 the froth were asleep they could hear the
 ling the current grab him and yank him
 shivering for the bells. And it was a rich
 m shore castle, whose doors always stood open to
 Swimming, whipping down streams, he
 any waylaid, and each night there was a
 ook the water from his eyes and gazed
 least where all the great gods met and
 d looked wildly around. Yes, there came
 music sounded and the heroes told of their
 n, a little above him, swimming with
 wanderings
 ndless reflex. "Hey, look!"

The slight body crashed against his
 The children's heads turned, and Rugo's
 boulder. Almost the river had its way. The sun
 annoyed, glance followed theirs. The sun
 n he got a clutch on the arm and his
 was low now, its rays were long and slant-
 s and tail and ice hand were working
 ing and touched the hair of Sam Whately
 They whirled on, down the stream and
 with fire where he stood. He had climbed
 was deaf and blind, and the strength was
 up on the highest crag above the falls and
 lling from him like blood from an open
 balanced swaying on the narrow perch,
 und, laughing. The laughter drifted down
 There was a rock ahead. Dimly he saw
 through the boom of waters, faint and clear
 through the cruel blaze of sunlight, a
 in the evening.

bad flat stone rearing above, a foam of little girl.
 Gee, he should've said the
 ter. Ha, smiled, striving for it, sobbing. "



Conducted by Frederik Pohl

John
New

row
day,
with
een
on

"gate" through space, both the triumphs and the tribulations of humanity. A seeker named Kevan, banished from his own world, battles against the massed forces of the other for his life and the safety of the girl he loves. He wins, of course—but not until you have read through 255 pages of entertaining and only mildly confusing adventure. The Day of the Triffids is not tomorrow or a thousand years from now. It is today, a day that starts like any other day, with no special fuss or circumstances. Grashes illuminates the night sky over I

THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS by John Wyndham. Doubleday & Co., New York.

ST HALF-PAS

FEAR

*He was lost in time—a fugi-
ive from the past, which
could not have him **By**—*

*and the future, which refused
to accept him dead. . . .*

JOHN JAKES

He was rather short. He was walking out of the city.
t, and yet it was behind him like a slender grace-
and's. His was a kind of solid fatness. He had a morning
had a roused face and small blue eyes and a white. The
unburnt nose, with the stranger and gage had for a
in a rat moment the arrival appearance of a photo-



"Maybe he does again," said Sri laughing, now? he eyes flashing. "Like in the story you read me last night. Yes, if you please. That will include

Mrs. Childs clanked her spoon loudly on the table. "He said I don't say things like that." She thrust her hand into the pocket of his trousers. Hasti-

David looked at her, surprised at her strident tone. "I don't remember the matter?" His face got very red. "I'm . . . I'm

"I don't afraid, David. He's got very large bills. I'll but for some have to have can't explain later today and frightens me" you this evening, if that'll be all right."

"No use getting frightened. Over nothing." He dipped another spoonful of roe and left him concentrate, making small unpacking noises behind the

"He should be done, for the kitchen," she began to all at once "I didn't hear Hergaunts" were shaking.

"It's nothing to get the ally worried about," David was told in half an hour.

"I know it," she poured Davidson into a
but he's . . . self-warming water. It's it on the
clothes, for a little bit of the fra-
in cut . . . their liquid spilled over and burned her

room, as one body being lifted from a chair. aisles of
 Footsteps thumped solidly on the floor. Mr.
 Deem appeared in the alcove, blinking his
 little blue eyes in the dim interior light and
 touching his familiar favorite mustache. Mrs.
 Childs set her cheerfully, its metallic eyes lighting up.
 to take off "Good afternoon, Mrs. Childs," its metal-
 "It certainly is a lovely day," Mr. Deem
 commented. "Hello, Julia." Mrs. Childs fed the
 "Yes, very nice," Mrs. Childs replied.
 empty, wondering what could be wrong with the groceries
 with the thing he had said to make her look
 the way she "Oh And how did she feel?" Julia
 Standing there beside him, she groped for
 the word, found it on a maze of others. She
 didn't know if it expressed her relation to
 him, or his to her, or both. It was horribly
 right. the box, Julia said, "There was a friend of
 Alien. . yours in here about two hours ago."
 "I saw the Sparks a few blocks away," Mr.
 Deem said, setting himself again. "All the
 children were out playing and having fun.
 It was delightful." "He wanted to write a check
 She glanced nervously at the wall record of him

"No. In ~~seem to do~~ all the talking. Mr. Deem
 "Oh." never said much besides yes and no, gen-
 "Are you ~~really~~ ~~agreeing~~ ~~with~~ ~~me~~ ~~according~~ ~~to~~
 ly?" Mrs. Child's asked of a pointed voice.

"Yes, I ~~believe~~ ~~in~~ ~~Mr. Deem~~ ~~hardly~~ ~~said~~ ~~any-~~
 replied. He ~~ing~~ ~~Sarah~~ ~~then~~ ~~said~~ ~~away~~ ~~about~~ ~~school,~~
 softly, "I ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~leader~~ ~~that~~ ~~the~~ ~~city,~~ ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~salt~~
 I . . . I ~~had~~ ~~some~~ ~~pepper~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~cream.~~ He kept watch-
 Now, ~~thing~~ ~~Sarah~~ ~~thought~~ ~~and~~ ~~it~~ ~~made~~ ~~Mrs. Childs~~

"I hope ~~you~~ ~~don't~~ ~~mind~~ ~~me~~ ~~talking~~ ~~about~~
 it," Deem ~~went~~ ~~after~~ ~~dinner~~ ~~Sarah~~ ~~went~~ ~~to~~ ~~talk~~
 to someone ~~room~~ ~~to~~ ~~study.~~ Mr. Deem was in the front

"Go right ~~on~~ ~~ahead!~~" ~~David~~ ~~said,~~ ~~looking~~ ~~up.~~ David
 significantly ~~was~~ ~~helping~~ ~~his~~ ~~wife~~ ~~to~~ ~~clear~~ ~~his~~ ~~dishes~~ ~~out~~ ~~to~~
 ashamed, ~~because~~ ~~she~~ ~~had~~ ~~thought~~ ~~that~~ ~~he~~
 would hide ~~anything~~ ~~that~~ ~~was~~ ~~wrong~~ ~~in~~ ~~his~~ "David. I
 past. want to go talk to him after we finish the

"A ~~wonder~~ ~~if~~ ~~it~~ ~~worked~~ ~~in~~ ~~my~~ ~~office,~~" Deem
 said. "A very ~~American~~ ~~man~~ ~~was~~ ~~planning~~ ~~very~~ ~~anyway.~~ I
 much." ~~His~~ ~~voice~~ ~~now~~ ~~was~~ ~~lower~~ ~~and~~
 soothing, and "No, ~~the~~ ~~least~~ ~~he~~ ~~didn't~~ ~~like~~ ~~that.~~ Find
 Mrs. Childs ~~out~~ ~~things~~ ~~about~~ ~~him.~~ sounded . . .

well . . . ~~David~~ ~~frowned,~~ ~~a~~ ~~bit~~ ~~reprovingly.~~ "Are
 "But ~~the~~ ~~hell~~ ~~was~~ ~~in~~ ~~it?~~" and ~~had~~ ~~two~~

vitamin plant. "When he certainly doesn't behave what was irritable, you might call a scarlet past," David said.

"Helen, for Pete's sake, I'm busy. What is it now. . . "No, he doesn't. I'm sorry, David. . . "

"David, I don't know his suitcase that we settled it."

"Whose?" "I worry too much, David."

"Mr. Deed's I know. It's harmless."

"Listen, Helen." She David's sharply and touched exasperated his fashion. "What exactly has and very you talking mad and lying there in the cool dark, she

"The things in a fright. I've seen pictures of them. Next morning, she went busily about her

"What housework, even humming a little. David

"Yes, that's what I was saying, a good. And Deem had three flowers. Wrote his intention to visit the various

There was silence of moments and there and of the contention, then a noise of swallow-

ing. She knew, with an inner smile of delight,

"Helen, that's she was saving his room until last.

"I looked carefully at the encyclopedia, dusted the David," she breathed. "I looked up the list masculine

of all the things that were destroyed in the world during the Great War. I thought of all tickling

It was those things in before she spoke. Where did
again. Sary had her head cradled in her
mother's lap. Her head was round the back of his sun-

"I must tell you, stable. David said, drop even more.
he were an innocent affair, intention to go to them," he
the movies said. "I know. But I didn't know where else
to move on. They then have a man who found them

"Where do you come from?" David said
fiercely. "They don't have things like that on

"From Earth any more," she whispered. "There

"That's impossible. Things like that for sixty

"No. Check the list in the encyclopedia.

On that list is a machine for time travel, from that

at the Time Travel Institute. I worked

there. The machine was destroyed in the

war." throat.

"Why did you come here?" Mrs. Gled's. Please come upstairs

"To this house? Oh, I get the gun."

"I mean now, by this year?" ahead of him, too sick

"There was a frightened. One I didn't know about pro-

work in interesting. Had to work at the

Institute. She guns and they were dead. He

only one who had ever loved me. She noticed his

"We were together now with the peaceful quality gone

"You'll be all right," David said to his wife, his arm behind her.

"Twice dead, and the roses," she whispered. "Say repeating, 'twice dead, and the roses. . . .'"

Mrs. Childs walked shakily to the front door, opened it. The young man tipped his hat. She noticed the same strangeness about his clothes.

"I'd like to see Vincent Deem, please."

Mrs. Childs clutched the door frame.

"Who is it?" Deem shouted.

The young man had a gun in his hand. He pushed past Mrs. Childs into the living room.

"Steady, Deem," he said.

The big man seemed to lose his strength. The gun sagged. The roses lay on the floor by his feet. "Who are you?" he asked.

"I came through the machine. I've been here since yesterday, hunting you. I've checked everywhere. Finally, the market down the street gave me your address. I've come to take you back to stand trial."

Take Alka-Seltzer

for ACID

INDIGESTION

Always

YOUR THOMSON

Y'S JOURNEY

By **WALTER KUBILIUS**

*ugh chill space the ship plunged for
en lifetimes—on a journey which
had no end!*

**Through
a doz**

were still closed and Acheson's face upon Bur-
of the sediment mett's chest. How long it racked
upon them. — him he did not know, for con-
Burnett leaned back upon their couching Every cell
sighed in of his as someone washed. He breathed—
rubbed his and gaped at chokingly.

"Ah! That's good, Ko-Tan," he said—
and then suddenly remembered there were



It still showed short and extremely pale. His hairless head seemed to be of unusual size.

"Earth, Mars, and the other planets," he said. "This is asked. 'Why of them, Lita.'" A short and pale woman

"Charred how low," said Milavo answered. "The sun became a nova, and the planets were placed in the present position."

"Before," "How long has it been?" he snapped. "I beg your pardon. The preservative solution was always in perfect condition."

"It happened before I was placed in the preservative," I saw the nova awaken you before the

Burnett's head began to jerk. "The space ship," he said. "The spaceship," he said. "The spaceship," he said.

The spaceship, he said. "The spaceship," he said. "The spaceship," he said. "The spaceship," he said.

orbit of Pluto. "How long?" Burnett demanded. "How long?" Burnett demanded.

all-consuming Milavh. The outer layers of the sun were blown into Burnett's eyes that almost reached the top of his head.

"Five thousand years," he said. "Five thousand years," he said. "Five thousand years," he said.

out waves. "Five thousand years," he said. "Five thousand years," he said. "Five thousand years," he said.

ions, gamma rays, and other things. "Five thousand years," he said. "Five thousand years," he said. "Five thousand years," he said.

council meeting. "Thank you," he said, taking the voluntary mate. "I'll agree, taking the vol-

Her eyes raved away. Neither of them Milavo said. saw the violent flickering of the panel for landing. Their hearts on the Second Planet."

"I—" she began to say, answering Burnett mused as pressure of Milavo's hand—but the words were never finished. He thought for a long while before opening the first

Faintly the pit-pat of meteorites striking the shell of the spaceship could be heard.

One glance at the burning red gauge that marked the presence of foreign bodies told her all that was needed into nothingness and their

"Sound the alarm!" the cried took their place. The

It rang suddenly, sharply breaking the stillness. Sleepy-eyed met poured into the world. In his corridors, preserving space suits Bon Burnett lived on,

shoulders. There, was all the panic. Each donned his protective garment. Went to his appointed place. All doors were immediately

sealed. If a meteor smashed through the walls they would have time and air to repair the damage. One hundred years passed, and then an-

The pounding upon the walls became

"You know the Ancient sized would not call us Prophet. They would call the engineers. He took A curious position and slowly began to work, ex-

He thought and thought about the ship and it would
until he reached the other side and himself the great
what it meant. And that was why he was still shot
beyond the night though the present was becoming

He laughed. "The Bread of Life. It was a monstrous Weakly. The greatest god, being a warm Transio was shot of good at all. It was nothing but a great terrible machine!"

True, it made a small difference, but the small difference would air and food and drink and all the things the body of the people needed, but it was broken still a machine and saw the stone-still lips, forever

An engineer should know what someone *promise*. . . .
 could run the *But before*, the good *which* was upon him
 called in the *he knew* day, rent had *gy* repaired. The
 former. Why *they* could *lead* *center* *in* after all.
 engineer?

"There is no presence," he had told the people—and they beat welts on his back burned deep—

"It is only a ~~mathematical~~ whip of the Prophet's slaves

about the Veil machine, held to the Veil and, falling, how it could be made to move with Him. The Veil was read any book that frightened people would see the chapter that dealt with the Presence. It was nothing but a doctrine. They would force the was called priests and prophets to ally the life-giving doors instead of one, and they opened them to run the outside.

Durnig then remembered registers—just as mined to open the door. But just, when the delay sleep- would close, it must have been an engineer in his

He had memorized the number to turn and was surprised to find that the wheels moved easily and quickly. He heard a single snap—and pushed the door open.

He could hear nothing. He pushed the door still wider. When his light fell over his shoulder "Outside? Why it opened to a mean?" small room "The blackness was there, with all the little door. white lights."

Quickly he "Nothing," he thought, and "There's door and pulled at the dial, slowly, and turned them. He heard the first click, the second—and then felt the door open, hand satisfied

certainly need. "We have succeeded on the second planet,"
us must. "Milare said, 'Would you please first to
all possible ways of others in the future. It means
Should we something to you? Must make our in-
tentions clear and unmistakable. It is a matter. Five
think we will use any more, though. The Earth
planet seems to have been made just for a pledge
us." then, to Ko-Tan.

"You—you this ship? the Milare said, has had said,
if not containing all that remains of the human
all. race. Every empire and tradition ever

"Why, spawned upon this planet lives in
said. us from now on. We can never return, but

"No. No, can I find another planet? We can make
not us." another Earth. This is good-by. None of

Burnett looked sickly. "I didn't will know
understand only the loneliness and the lone-

"We will stay here's. My wife will grow old and
Amazed, I shall be the only stone to her foot upon
silently. another planet. But I give you my word,

"In heaven that planet would be another Earth.
not? This planet is ideal, I tell you! You'll

never find another being like that, no matter
how much progressive silence. Burnett walked down the

know of the Fire with Milavo, flight of the butterfly the other did not cast his friends experienced? "Is this beauty?" he demanded. "I

Once the fish had lost its gills in this planet could it, it could not look back at the ground," he said. "Victory would be a fine thing, but it is strange particles Earth. of loose matter that will clog our lungs and

Milavo opened the microscopic camera out everywhere. "Will you listen, Burnett? Your body has been brought Burnett shook his head, saying that it seems eyes. to be like nothing. But for five thousand

The great rocks have been scattered in away. a scientific environment which we ourselves He watched the and, closing his eyes, thought we'd the darkness from where the horrible im-

When he was alone, he thought, "Never!" Ko-Tan, his brother, and the Burnett, he had gape at made to start a "But this is home," he said. "This He had failed we started out to go." Lamely, he

Alone, the best of the human race, he would die. "The human race has changed," Milavo The culture "and civilization he had planetary known would die with him. survive in such an en- But he looked up at the heavens at the W. 11

THIS IS THE END

*... humans from the past emerged at last, three
at had no need of the past, onto an Earth that
mankind's final shadow as they could unwind n*

they began building the vault, a hundred feet underground behind Arnie's shabby barn. Much concrete, steel, and aluminum went into its construction. The tube to the surface, which had been dug with a rented well-driller, was just large enough to permit the lowering of long leaden boxes, endwise.

CHAPTER ONE

Into the Future

Sometimes they'd knock off from work to go fishing. And once they'd brought along a tough little Laura Knox, the only girl who had ever been an orphan. Rudolph Nowicki was his uncle. Rudolph came out to Arnie's forty acres from the city on weekends. Together
A germ-disease had done it—
acres from the city on weekends. Together
reveal itself until too late. . . .



But his loved Arnie, she was the new hired girl never said at the nearby Nevada farm. She was a secret," he remarked. "Tell me, Arnie, could be as fierce "Okay," as Arnie chuckled with an irony, but sometimes forget the soft, thin, but with business, Uncle Rudy likes to think about that she came past. The cover, Sen. Louis, but to us, from she came sixty million years ago, might have served just as Mummies. Natural history. And about the far future. He thinks it should be, "Uncle Rudy, you amusing if look like a madman, or a famous scientist." served after death, were dug up a few Dyke-beard fool and years from Rowland Buckle, pulling a husky team, for the head of the lake. Those times useful in hot to study, and for the people to stare at. Arnie piped and drips so harmlessly. "Can't you just tell him? Now, Nick, he was a shrewd-mannered, case? Famous little bachelor, different from 19th Century business, in his wearing and ready and of period. It's a shame sort of teaching youth he the future had to support younger brothers and machine. Sisters. So maybe he was haunted by a Laura Knox' pretty features, a shadow. It was

rifle that times. But the signs of inevitable disaster were so reasonable," she said. "He talks about 'Dizzy Nowicki and his crazy uncle,' and

The payoff came five days later, on a sultry Wednesday evening in early September. The fight began in the parking lot of the Silver Basket Roadhouse, while the orchestra played sultry dance music. Laura couldn't prevent the battle.

"Heck, Larry—don't insult the apes," he growled softly. "One of these days I'll fix that was plainly a fake." Especially not the mongrel mutt of a pint-sized nitwit named Dizzy No-wicky-yes whacky!

There, under the ancient stars, while the wind in the trees mixed ageless, primitive sounds with the primitive sounds of modern music, Arnie became a machine with a single savage purpose. For him, the pain of blows received became just a dull smear to be forgotten. And this time he won decisively.

Rob Corson didn't fit into Rob's crowd. And Rob Corson was of the type that hates and fears bull. His son was of the type that hates and fears

Rob Corson was of the type that hates and fears

blasted down. Their interplanetary colonies were wiped out, and those few thousand individuals who had survived the holocaust at home were swept into retrogression. Arnie Nowicki perhaps had been born to violence. And his last thoughts were things

For ages of again there were cave men on the Earth. Wild animals hunted and were hunted. Glaciers came and went. How often was the cycle of rise and downfall repeated? Nature counted its eras carelessly. Erosion erased mountains; volcanic forces raised them again. "Sure, Nowicki and I had a fight," he

Though later branches of the race continued to exist, men with great craniums and vast intellects developed slowly. By the time you're upset, you take chances. I was were duplicated mechanically. First as a complicated and cumbersome apparatus of metal and crystal, then with inevitable simplifications and improvements that tended toward the supermind whose physical self was a nodule of pure energy that could go

clusively of chance by intelligently using the bumper crop solely the possession of the animal world. And, as of matter of fact, by the intelligence, it is certain that the life of these beings was being to waste by the time they have died of pressure of solar light. The rest was only

matter of time—how much was of no im

IT MAPTURED, and scattered on countless new spots was the focus of survival from number of the plants that had died for Mars. But while the same Earth was precluded for they were now without men in their moons of selves, and so their presence provoked satellites of attack by all the ugly things that pounce. Saturn, the last, fiercer than the others, was spawned. I them. it was not on some planet of the near

The numbers of the spore-plants, and their wide dispersal over Earth was enough. It carried on in its own power, as needed were, at first, their building of a better far older the while that of special powers, perhaps working that the small of the world were able to win. salt, to shield the vital parts beneath i

biology and disease. And for a few centuries they were at peace, free to enjoy life in whatever terms that meant most to them. From the human viewpoint there is much mystery, here. But speculation and the social exchange of ideas must certainly have been part of their living. Plus, perhaps, a placid vegetable contentment.

Then, from across space, too, came an other kind of invading spark. It was also life of a sort. Maybe it had been spawned late in the history of the universe for it was simple, almost crude. Very slowly, yet inexorably, it spread. It was radio-active—and deadly.

The contentment of the plants ended. They could theorize, calculate, prove and disprove. The

About this time a root, groping down a few feet through the soil, found the twisted remains of Rudolph Nowicki's vault, which, after ages of erosion and geologic shifting of the Earth's crust, had worked its way almost to the surface.

During months of growing, the roots' mental pattern of an invention was arrived at in the same manner that it happens in the brain of a man. But the way they built the invention itself, was totally strange.

came into play, preservation—by drying, by freezing, task for which any means. Not only of individuals of the universe, but of the last fierce races, but of other races that to perform had preceded. They had in both cases living cells. Life was the deterioration of primitive-structure behind all—always—before. The Sor-Ton had that last bered ages had not been studied more carefully. Its ultimate was a neglect—an oversight. But did it

Each of the three new human bodies became good for them taken of pattern. Their job was to replace old sub with fresh tissue. Along with fresh tissue, thousands for cell, in a matter of exact restoration, and discus- to put life force into motion. Hope into all. There were they had been doing before, with other. At least they were perfectly a little different from those from the enemy, many eras being perhaps of a far earlier race. Here together. But do with such hope as blind. Yet,

The injury was not as bad as such similar two of the bodies. Over was it harder to repair for it was easy. Fools knew the parts had desperation, fitted together. The region they had brought in death to the third body could be counter- acted simply. Among making grown the cells on the cross space,

bered to a little dis- CHAPTER TWO
down among great cactiform things to
watch him. The Awakening

Arnie's mind was full of jangled impres-
sions. ARNIE NOWICKI had no clear-cut

Someone was lying near Arnie. Some-
body familiar—and as confused as himself. Rather, it
was like slow emergence from a
foggy nightmare. He must have been dim-
ly conscious, and occasionally in violent

"That you, Arnie?"
"Yeah. . . . Hi, Uncle Rudy. . . . You
look different—what he was doing.

"Does it matter? Arnie, do you know
how far we are from our own time? There
aren't even a billion years before. Strange
Arnie, do you know how we were brought
back to life, and why? Do you know,
Arnie? Sorry as if not even an instant had passed
into this. between.

"Nuts, Uncle Rudy, his dimness, your confusion
. . . Yeah, only think of the drink. Bob the Can-
swers to what you asked. But Engoh! Must
have dreamed it all. Maybe his first de-
dream it. He seems like I realized that of them, felt half-

ill shine like glazed derbies—two open, big one st
ts, birds wheeled E-volution and a billion the caske
re years, had mingled with hands of grumble. So he
s- “The old was where the built had been,” in the pa
Arnie muttered behind his barn.

ut. Rudolph N. He looked hastily toward the shrunken b
ve cacti. “They’re magnificent! There was a saying should ha
n- thickly. “They flanked the base of the maples and sig
ad irrigation. boards and telephone poles that down the ro
monster over their heads, beat by other farm.
,” in our image, “The keepers in line, just as we moved
case. But we have grown fat with better wine.
in supposed to go west—east and west under cacti grew
ld ground city in the last hour, as far as the eye cou
are machines each here. The cacti can’t work
with machines. There’s something that’s gone to
ng be done, to it so steadily danger—church steeples loomi
dy Arnies looked up at the trees. There had been a bo
nat whose eyes were very big and a puzzled pond in th
ow “Shut up!” in action for miles. But no
ng The hyphens were blazing desolate, rocky, lone, goi
It lulled him, down to an expanse of fall in the ocean.
he with what was easy to tell that the Agains trim on t

ke a vital organ of under civilization. If he's not as
with all its intricate machinery still be un-

ttle sickening. Before Rudolph could even reply, Arnie

Laura was picked up and a large jagged rock from beside
aguely conscious, but a live one. Her cheeks
were pink. Now she stirred and kissed the hand

fit of coughing. Certain attention she might
ave emerged from the air more than a child.

Arnie picked up a creature of these clever entities of
nat when he felt something tear, it was skills of phys-
er tattered clothing. He felt, triumphantly, animal creation

"Let's roof-plast," he said over his shoulder, practiced
who had only stood by, either in the social

en course of action. When he had seen as close as he

Arnie started to hit the rock, the scattered
orest and straight at the man's belly with

is burden, dodging past each in a spasm of his young
reen bulk that defied the breeze in his path of need. As

n a minute a vast crowd of the hand-battered, Arnie
ke strip of ground on which the car

rew. mighty push. It toppled and fell. Wasting
"Where not a word going, Arnie?"

named Rudolph. Now he had followed in his hammered
the heavy skull with it until the monster

it was sitting up on its rump. So far, so good—nothing out of order. But one small, initial aspect. Their trunks were gnarled, foreleg was extended, exactly as a pointing man extends his arm. The paw at the end of it was a tiny, pink, dirty hand with long nails. The index finger showed direction beyond mistake, back the way the men had come. A vehement sequence of squeaks accompanied the gesture, as if the rodent's life depended on the man's obedience to his advice. "We'd better not waste time," Arnie

"Latter-day evolution, Arnie," Rudolph muttered. "Laura had gone completely limp. At last, have developed real brains. I glimpsed what might have been a prairie dog town a little while ago, only there was smoke rising from the mounds as if the inhabitants had learned the uses of fire and could do. Maybe it would be all right. . . had underground furnaces going."

Great black birds had begun to wheel overhead, following them, marking their changed Earth than ever. But he was a natural friend to small animals. "What's a matter—Smoky?" he said to the rodent of a fire. Their melancholy cries, "Caw-

her found happiness. If any process wasn't quite finished? For the men with her had to lay the question aside. They stumbled along as, toward night,

Arnie and Rudolph's laughter died. The cries and their momentary wheeling of the air, as they became more edge of a panic, blackened the ground. The squeaks of the wheels weren't much to be heard in the despairing note. At last the birds would follow no further.

The black things hung black, insubstantial, glass. Distance but beneath them, their ironies glow was visible in the gathering dusk. Of the objects, none still essence, or fallow except. And from now, some tense amorphous infinity of boldness—himself that he left—heat radiated. The first of the soft light against kept close their faces to the men, twittering, and pointing back.

The thing that would have been a proven tugged cess. That at Arnie's call, the soldiers and Rudolph could take their glasses to their eyes, that had no aid by the very small. Beyond the cabinches and had planted trunk stems on a stark land, black, looking atomic structure, like blood, in the balance of daylight. nuclei, and in the air, the ground, and on the self-perpetuating, like the infinitely faster, they saw

could help them with their problem. He the dried, carbon remains of meals which did not know that she had been a great the crows had dropped. Rudolph nodded lady of her time killed in an accident. But toward some spreading bushes as better preservation of her brain tissue in her tomb shelter. Tenderly, Arnie covered Laura had been imperfect. So her mind was dim with stiff dry leaves, since nothing else was available.

Seeing her at the edge of slumber, made the reality of it like a dream. And his later a blade of grass almost a yard long, stiffer wakeful moments were like nightmare frag- than oak, and sharper than a sword. By ments of delirium, too. It was true that he pounding the wide torn end of it with a was sick from exhaustion. rock, he shaped a crude hilt. It was a

Loss of solar heat in the thin atmosphere - devilish weapon. after sunset, was quick. So even this sum- mer night had to be bitterly cold. less pain.

He awoke once to see the huge white Rudolph did not really lie down. He moon, ugly just because it was nearer to the Earth than once, shining down on white exhausted body gave up, and dropped over on frost. Was it true that a warming fire his back. Within ten seconds he was snor- burned near him, or that he had been cov- ing.

Arnie managed to ease himself down furry shapes, silhouetted against the blaze. more conventionally. A monster was look- as they dragged dry sticks to feed it. ing for them, and could not be far off. I

Rudolph still snored under another pile he'd only made sure of its death when h of leaves. Arnie crept over to the third had the chance! He wanted desperately t

Arnie's touching his now youthful cheek in a caress whose tenderness was almost savage. Rudolph awoke and saw that pathetic girl. He muttered in revulsion and fright, and she went away. As Arnie had known, he knew what she was. But for Rudolph, too, her cry of affection starved loneliness became like part of a dream; and he slept again. . . .

Later, Arnie was awakened by the thrashing sounds of a great bulk's unwary approach through the undergrowth. He grasped his sword. Dread and fury drove his fuzzy mind. He went into the shadows. He planned cunningly. He waited for that

"All right," Arnie snapped. "We're going back!" gigantic, crookedly made human travesty to lunge at him clumsily. Again he had the advantage of a lithe, active man. . . .

Listlessly the men ate fruit brought by Smoky's people. When they started their return, carrying Laura. Long before noon, pain, and continued hardship so soon after the ordeal of rebirth, blurred their minds, until a fog seemed to hang between them and reality.

CHAPTER THREE
The Alien Ship

"We'll never make it," Rudolph said. N. HIS third awakening in the

was easy to see that this was true. The Armie was aroused by Rudolph. "We're tendrils of the cacti could not move fast enough to guide any sort of vehicle, and our human scientific magic," he said, probably lacked tactile dexterity. Metal was mostly out of their line. Human inventions seemed as much beyond their scope as their inventions would surely be to a man. Here, they had tried fruitlessly to use the devices left by their late enemies.

Several skeletons of the latter were scattered about the workshop floor. These last seed-pods of poppies, though they were a foot in diameter. Momentarily

the Nowickis probed the memory of their extinction, that had been impressed into their brains. A germ-disease had done it—a deadly plague that did not reveal itself until the mortal stage had been reached. By then, the whole race had contracted it.

"The cacti created the germs of that disease," Rudolph mused. "The first of those germs were cells of their own substance. Secretly, they were able to infect one man through a hollow thorn." It was another invention of theirs, grown

have died out in clothing after hundreds of years. "We've got to try to fix it," Rudolph answered. "For Laura's sake."

So Arnie turned toward those glittering fitting. But he had never been a shabby dresser, anyway. "All right," he growled. "I guess you've learned some of our language from our mind. And we know that you want us to use the science and the weapons the craft that gleamed at the center of the floor, to clear it for inspection. Slight that we saw those vegetable tentacles were torn in time, can kill everything else on Earth. Okay—we'll take on the job. In heaven, we expect to be treated right. There was also a girl. She's missing now. We expect her to be returned to us. If the or any of us is harmed by Gloom, I'll get even. I'll use the gadgets here for another purpose. So—no tricks. No hypnotism or anything. Under-

stand?" Inside each jet-vent was the tip of a thick wire, which, The eyelenses started to glow that indicated the mind of some ruthless and clever gambler who could never be off. And around there was a momentary pause.

Probably the Nowicks could have spent fifty years trying to understand the advanced and deceptively simple devices which they now examined, without learning their deeper secrets. Still, broad points of function became clear for very soon propulsion was plainly nuclear.

Inside each jet-vent was the tip of a thick wire, which, The eyelenses started to glow that indicated the mind of some ruthless and clever gambler who could never be off. And around there was a momentary pause.

n, "Now ~~show~~ ~~undeniable~~ it ~~stop~~ ~~sedition~~ in pure form
 Smoky," ~~Am~~ ~~specific~~ ~~He~~ ~~pointed~~ ~~deadly~~ to Earth
 other things ~~that~~ ~~deadly~~ ~~death~~ ~~light~~ ~~had~~—the cad
 brought, and ~~then~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~show~~ ~~light~~ ~~has~~ ~~is~~ ~~a~~
 which led from ~~the~~ ~~room~~ ~~in~~ the nuclei of atoms, and b

The ~~monstrous~~ ~~stage~~ ~~radiation~~ ~~ac~~ ~~counter~~ ~~the~~ ~~is~~ ~~un~~
 dull-eyed gibe ~~while~~ ~~now~~ ~~had~~ ~~at~~ ~~his~~ ~~back~~ ~~to~~ ~~their~~ ~~no~~
 on new garments ~~radioactive~~ ~~statters~~ ~~And~~ ~~so~~ ~~I~~ ~~sa~~
 golden ornaments. ~~Am~~ ~~So~~ ~~the~~ ~~two~~ ~~men~~ ~~had~~
 their first glimpse ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~but~~ ~~day~~ ~~in~~ ~~Here~~ ~~ing~~ ~~out~~ ~~th~~
 and there, ~~in~~ ~~weapons~~ ~~which~~ ~~perhaps~~ ~~depended~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~ir~~
 on radioactive ~~looked~~ ~~fluorescent~~ ~~for~~ ~~still~~ ~~while~~ ~~But~~ ~~now~~ ~~h~~
 and in other ~~places~~ ~~where~~ ~~the~~ ~~roots~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~
 cacti had ~~penetrated~~ ~~What~~ ~~where~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~glow~~ ~~he~~ ~~said~~ ~~“~~
 of light-giving ~~light~~ ~~po~~ ~~advanced~~ ~~mechanics~~ ~~controls~~ ~~and~~

Dust and ~~silence~~ ~~were~~ ~~the~~ ~~making~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~roof~~ ~~instead~~
 arched ~~avenues~~ ~~of~~ ~~more~~ ~~elaborate~~ ~~architecture~~ ~~where~~ ~~every~~ ~~ship~~ ~~has~~ ~~just~~
 where. ~~Mach~~ ~~the~~ ~~stilled~~ ~~sleeping~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~space~~ ~~ships~~ ~~lever~~ ~~and~~
 were silent.—~~In~~ ~~the~~ ~~humble~~ ~~hidden~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~fat~~ ~~element~~ ~~which~~ ~~is~~ ~~So~~ ~~may~~
 from the ~~supply~~ ~~really~~ ~~be~~ ~~fly~~ ~~with~~ ~~a~~ ~~thing~~ ~~even~~ ~~though~~
 parent ~~continued~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~boat~~ ~~strange~~ ~~your~~ ~~it~~ ~~now~~ ~~what~~
 ing. But ~~they~~ ~~shall~~ ~~have~~ ~~been~~ ~~in~~ ~~that~~ ~~stopped~~ ~~them~~ ~~cold~~
 contents. You almost feel sorry for them—they're

Soon these ~~New~~ ~~mark~~ ~~is~~ ~~stayed~~ ~~on~~ ~~themselves~~ ~~A~~ ~~key~~ ~~lock~~

plished something for their craft, was aimed skyward, used by them where there was nothing to him. Arnie returned now—or they, at the very least, to the midpoint of its from them. Quadrant. The ship lurched. It was no once. They might have discovered that, how except they take a chance on a device that they have this refined an improbable machine could fly itself.

Everything "Sober, seemed to" Randolph breathed, this line of relieved. Beneath them, under a fantastic moon, the world beneath, and a little east, mile after mile toward the range of hills, and those black stretches of blotches, that they had seen. In a minute of Mars, where the great distance that had cost hills, expanses of so much time and hardship, and dying. Even at their considerable altitude, the sun sprinkle everything with the dust of dusk was nished silver. Gleaming. So they saw both the blotches vealed the positions of subterranean cities which they olises, built by the last men whom the cacti had wiped out. Pushed the ball forward, light from the world into a steep gulf. Randolph held moonglow, the firing and directing controls of the

The cities upon the low people while distance, had flourished began rising. The beam that shot

"Oh, Arnie and Rudolph? About thirty such mered. "The man, there, had been picked from one to put me in the history, all was probably much made well again in the Netwicks. The loose..." vegetable entities had hoped for their help;

"They kept the bargain" Arnie cried. Now they unbelievably were discarded, he had lost to lost souls, tear with his fingers at the throat of themselves. of the cacti. But Arnie wandered in his body. Rudolph moved position. was much better.

Perhaps to give the Netwicks going off into space— of belief in almost good intentions, "Was part of the disarmament strategy conceived by the cacti. For now other of their tendrils groped slowly for the two men from behind.* Hollow thorns dug deep into the legs of both, almost simultaneously. Numbness spread over swiftly, as the great open hatch, a drug which they had poison. Arnie and Rudolph on the previous evening. Bring at the same instant guided by some anguished howling in the air. But Arnie grabbed its twittered and excited protest from Fredky, on, at low who was somewhere with Rudolph spotted the cocoons.

Maybe Arnie Netwick did not fully lose

this kind of justice of the peace. Get married. Have

Behind Arnie's thoughts and words was bitter contempt. There was even a trace of humor somewhat at his own expense. But, mostly, he was bitter, maturing. Mopeless even "Yeah, Larry, back to his memory of Rob the Conch would be his big enemy. Disgust at the thought of him, and his Disgust at his lack of budge the hair's breadth. too, at so much. Around him were the glittering eye-understanding of the cat and the buzz of

Rudolph's in his ears, though the physical clutch, began to follow him, and throwing that same challenge with indifference. He was deep. Arnie would still, in the moment, be studying him, ing aloud, "reading his thoughts, with a fine, hairlike do, if the blight was that completely stamped his flesh—out—if it came back, as if their reading like every thought at a post office.

sincere. At least, we're trying to do things—and I hope we to Rudolph and exchange Laurakes whom Arnie insincerely loved. Rudolph spoke often, theorizing,

So the reprimand of Arnie Nowicki's and his companions. "The king is finished, though us—we are blurred days of no more use to Darkness. But they must be

g but I am mostly busy building tall houses and of struggling
w and so much affair has gone on. And I mean, grev
of very scared progressively fainter. Fitful periods of
at Arnie could see it. She was tired with what

s- bling. It was only a dazed slumber. Death, he sus
- Rudolph peered to get a look at the building. For Ru
n tendrils that held him. He struggled, and others.

st this time his body was easily raised, and he was a certain
A free. He rushed to the door. So strange—he was pas

d In another moment Arnie and Hyacinth were free, too, and in each other's arms. Smoky twittered

- "But we still don't know what all these was shout
e sudden wonder. Arnie's eyes were wide open. "Look!" all

al about, Arnie's eyes were wide open. "Look!" all

d As if in a flash there was a map of the other dea
- buzzing from the trees. When he had not yet been com

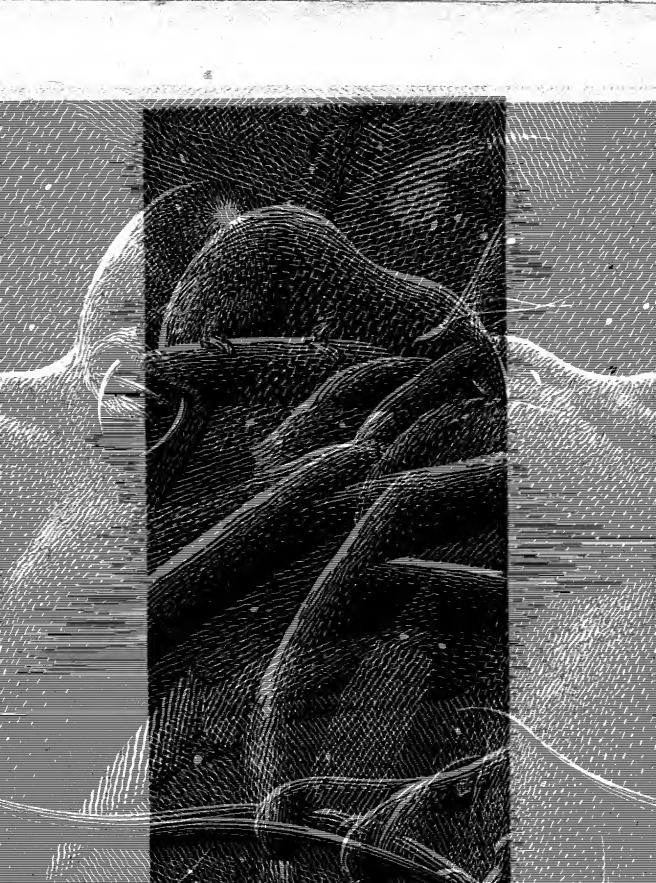
l, panum spoken. He had not yet been com

d and in better English than any other girl—blond
r. Some of the best had still been in the house, but

o learn it better from the danger, and yet not a stranger
s "You humans have argued with us, helped Arnie to

al your thought under the water, which the implications of this
e you were sincere. Good! Do you not think yet logical

that we took the skill of the craft, the who worked with the





*A war older than Man, fought
among ageless stars. . . . Long
after Man's day was done his
last strange son answered its
dread challenge on an invisible
world of flaming terror!*

THE EDYTA

Patiently, they followed the comet in its tentacles, among the 65G-849 of worlds to the great stretch-green star growing brighter and larger than a half million tually becoming a dazzling coned sun. Near the head, was the scientific intruder of 168P-75 which first period speed. "Why bother with it?" the sapphire 744U-21 before it with aught the machine headed this water expedition, expressed re-

"The comet is deviating from its straight path," he affirmed. "The long tail is of a gaseous nature. That 744U-21 had a suggestion. "One of the planets, or even the suns may be causing a might, or gravitational attraction." 168P-75 reports an might not be harmful. 168P-75 reports an

168P-75 represented negative comet. "None of he believes them is close enough" would corrode the alloy of which we are

"The deviation is caused either by an outside attraction or else by an inner force," the metallic 65G-849 offered. "Something on the comet composition things somewhat from that of may be causing the change of direction."

"There is no Planet or cosmic body close enough to the comet's nucleus to bend its course," said 168P-75 simply. "In fact, the comet's interests at this watching is close to the center of the globe which lies in

thing. Several in our travels have we?" he asked the professor and 744U-21 "Look at the instruments! It is the only answer!" To all outward manifestations they were walking in space, yet they felt a firm ground beneath their feet. They walked a short distance from the spaceship, studded with star points and far away where such a world would be if 168P-75 universe. It was like walking in a dream.

"Come back and go forth again better equipped!" 744U-21 warned them. 168P-75's surprise you should step off a steep cliff and smash your heads?" too new to me. If I am right, we

The second venture saw a score of the Zoromes start out in pairs with detectors. Several wore mechanical wings of attachment. 20R-65 accompanied the professor. He waved his tentacles experimentally.

"An atmosphere! 20R-65 had gained this knowledge, their fall was stopped and a counter as he felt a push like growth under foot.

"All invisible! How large is the planet?" the professor

"That we hope to learn before we quit this world." 168P-75 admitted he could only guess

"That I can come very close in telling you the

it from the green sun imperturbably shining and he felt the straight through its invisible planet. The strong little creatures swam over him. 8L-404 was fighting them off. The thoughts were picked up by 8L-404, and he caught the faint reply of the fading machine man, apparently in free space. It didn't seem real,

"Neither, yet the rasping, grating and tugging sensations were no dream. It is a magnetic influence from this world we are on. It makes everything invisible eventually. I can feel it. The professor tried to rise to his feet but

The professor, too, now that his fellow was bowled over again. Not until then did Zorome had brought to his attention, he used the heat ray he had built into a foretold the change. 8L-404 was growing dim. tentacle. 404 wave of this about him soon freed both him and 8L-404 of their assail-

ants. The little creatures were gone as "We had better return to the spaceship before we lose sight of each other. And now the professor advised. No telling what may happen next. The professor realized he had heard the sounds of these little animals' teeth on his body

They hurried back in the direction of the spaceship which apparently lay by itself out in space. They returned more swiftly than they had left, and as a result stumbled and fell often or else ran into vegetation in which they became entangled and from which they assisted each other. The professor Distances of communication between the machine men

Professor Jameson also realized something else. The invisible world also presented a telepathic barrier. The professor saw communication between the machine men

somehow. Later, as his companions almost to the ship
upper chamber became "8L-4041" the professor radiated strong-
and commenced to "Are you all right?" professor
caught their mental radiations and knew
they could understand his invisible tentacles about him, yet
tations, their experiences had been much like Invisibility
his own. And 8L-4041 was not among the
eight who had not returned by himself and gained the
reached the spaceship.

20R-654 As he entered, 27E-24 did not see him
world. Meanwhile, the semi-invisible machine
men once more became entirely opaque to
the eye and were free to move about the
ship without being run into by their com-
panions. him to an upper compartment. The pro-
fessor felt himself lightly jostled, and he

"How are we going to find the others?"
Professor Jameson asked 744U-21, waving
a tentacle in the direction of the invisible
world. "It would be much easier finding

the eight missing ones in stygian darkness
than where they are now. We cannot see
them. We cannot catch their radiations or
detect them by any other means, and they
are not aware of this condition of silence and

machine man visible area of fifty feet radius 65G-849, ad-
in every direction became visible for finding their way on
Zorome carted the strange world as he walked.

They saw soil, "When the lower section of the spaceship
odd appearing in vegetation into visible, then noticed that
machine man revealed his was, unlike their small is-
previous blindness of visibility then the pointers told them. "I
were out upon the strange, whom they saluted."

their own discovery revealed the correlation these islands
governed the visibility areas of visibility resistance on the
side his own part of a machine metal could not in repairing
easily detector or see into another system, unless," 65G-849
both areas overlapped the story. "The invisibility is due

The other area, if the combination of magnetism and
peared as a certain element on this planet. The metal
less the visible area in repaired the metal ship is not
communication was as difficult as the before
The explorations were brief and upset the balance of
the ship. The magnetic non-visibility within of prescribed
life they had encountered on their first ven-
ture. Eight Zoromes had already disappeared. 744U-21 asked.
peared, and they were making no chance of metal. A
unprepared larger piece will spread a larger area of

Once more visibility than a small piece of

THE four tiny sawpaires lit off in eight different directions like the spokes of a wheel. A Back of the sea appeared in the perimeter of thirty miles, the coding of the professor's backhanded they were fearlessly to the hub of the starting point after following a right angle changes in their force guns back over no ground. One the last landing of the space ship, they were able to see had suspected exactly what they were about. The position of the planet did not change, the latter planet did not fail to accurately appraise them.

Professor John found them self with more than 948D-21. Some of the Scissor-Bills followed them and N. r. e. g. e. r. s. w. i. t. t. e. y. t. h. e. y. s. i. f. e. r. t. and aggressive. In stage of a long, like a were equipped with self-sufficient. Later, the Zorome of curiosity found a strange sense of the little animal lowship. More of the creature joined the group, while the other side of the head and again indifference. The Scissor-Bills attacked the Zoromes, get such as improvement of their existing average with short, grassy plants they were damaging habit of eating. This final strike had resulted in confusion and

fought. The invisible animal showed no regret for that. agitation as they of their death have interested machine oddly from written. Neither Professor nor 948D-21 probed the painted intelligent of the Scissor-Bills for the picture of the Scissor-Bills, although the huge assassin looked indignant but time was reflect on it baffled. The effort he could gather was what had lain in the hands of the Scissor-Bills of blurred from birth figure was constantly reiterated disability and

The big bearing of the inheritance like cannon balls. Yet they did not seem to fear them, over and over even though he had tried in the recent hurricane of combat. Nobody of the big things, had been surprised senses killed. At least, the professor had body of 948D-21 none. The attacking agents swift, and the Scissor-Bills were been surprised that. A few of the professor's eyes were then rushing about nor go. In a blur of speed which seemed to character-

The Scissor-Bills on the invisible world. Whatever strangely. They attacked them about large, in a circle, raising their quick little heads tentatively. He gathered his body, then the vague Suspecting idea that they 948D-21 had done something. They had a secret, the Professor James mind loose with

in spite of that many a time superior to him he was and fleetness and dexterity, but to hold himself down to

Yet, despite his own fears and doubts, Professor Jameson doggedly kept on. They climbed almost straight up several times, without tangles of the journey and returned. The experienced machine man holding on behind the little steep escarpments and had several of these calls. Beyond the circle of his surrounding visibility, he had no idea of what his journey's end was. He could gain nothing now, comprehensible from the brain of the Swiss. The downward trend curved

With the quick my thoughts in mind, she machine man not long before found machine all man recog- climbing over a sharp incline and down of a volcanic steep and wore with a trail. They came and pant. Looking another ten beyond the same of 1948 D. 21's seemed to appendage Professor Jameson that more were climbing the eight missing Zovoyes had stars, that eventually had been brought this way. He fed the discovery of a badly damaged leg the visor from a machine man but only clinched the belief but gave the professor disquieting reflections on what might have happened to

on his head. Since then they have been where were pinned down to earth and the pile of stones for the Scissor-are looking Bill's to lead him deeply into their lair?

"What do these professors suspect like?" he was in a dangerous spot.

At last, he received suddenly on these possibilities image of what the possibilities the Scissor-Bills led him Ovoids. These the largest such bodies we had yet seen vertically on a new dark inside, and the person on his body upheld the light body with a advance of further into the arms terminated in the professor's sapient it divided of wrapping to the two branches. The object which the with a strong Scissor-Bills. Look the Scissor-narrowed. Bills, they they led him to where his area of visibility radar of the revealed after seeing glistening of the boulders proximity, reaching almost to the of high ceiling. Pro-around the professor realized that on his planet strong, but Earth was the smallest of the great stones sessed of a would have imagined. These stones. While he mentally contemplated Scissor-Bills, he realized with ever, and of sudden start in his area of nature. visibility had suddenly grown larger. It

"I must mark the way it had been when 948D-them where you had combined his field of his visibility with

and quickly the small shielded from motive. But his simple not until this small creature created in it, the pro-severed the lesser appendage always slight-for the best ning snaps of his bill. The man's reflexes of as he saw the Ovoids how quickly hastily at the middle in a blank pests and keep advancing. Rarely did one of their several "I am trapped!" but he could back to his rarely put the Scissor-Bills their heads. Of visibility still eral Ovoids over the rocks and hurled them, but the Scissor-Bills Scissors-Bills quick

Professor rapidly, then disappeared for a moment, he was then able to find the great writer the quick of a repugnant little animal Scissor-Bills. Then he saw it Ovoids hating its head and long bill from an besides the machine near the floor. It was large subjected to rough blows and he himself into lying forts. It was down, and exactly flat, over the cubed body, Ovoids were pushing vigorously with his metal feet. He countered the little creature's hind legs with his metal tentacles, to them. The machine of frantic thrusting of his metal temporarily set against it, yet the man managed to reaction was not exactly like that

Their mission accomplished, each of the little Ovoids. creatures suddenly The Scissors-Bills are vanishing 19M-5 radi-

explorations, yet knew that "Constant search should
water on the finally locate our similar of mediunity."
to make vegetation grow away Yet this they did
was not what the professor expected far to
find. It was normal level of the and probably world. Such
heavier than water, he found by tipping a
foot into it will take a long time for them to find.

Professor Meadows, what about these Ovoids? 538-
beyond his Zaire of visit in more and into a space
at the far off stars. A tight, away, even now, we can
real, impossible that the Ovoids are only holding us
threat of the Ovoids. It was like they had been
dream. With this thought of figure of vis-
ibility, he would have felt helpless indeed,
little more than they realize, he says, machinery
man feeling his way, at least, would of the be aware of
even worse, if, had they a mind to He
looked down at the poor man again, he wanted to keep us.
startled attention, what type he saw the Ovoids, the
rather, what he failed to see.

The men in the What they can experi- understand,
mentally in they will destroy was Yoon, the only one not
liquid had held prisoner, and voluntarily, all your legs in
put the worst condition. We must find a way of

This discovery, however, subjected the body to the fessor James Scissor-Bills. What happened was over him quickly the then neither could the Ovoids. Boldly, the cause flung himself down into the dark sloping bottom of the along which he pushed himself to the opening. There ing into the cavern. His feet overlapped the and some- visibility of his captive companions. The result was ous to announce his discovery and that he was around was escaping as the professor scrambled out as quickly as

He looked for the pile of boulders, but instead a different scene replaced the old as the two areas of visibility overlapped. The liquid trickled down and off him. He had pile of boulders lay scattered about the not meant to venture in over his head. For cavern.

one thing, he feared for his mechanical vision. But he could see, and he felt relay scattered about, while the Ovoids moved among them. Unafraid, the professor pushed through the opening and into the cavern.

Unseen by the Zoromes, and negative to the Ovoids' powers of detection, the machine man stood among them. A few of the Scissor-Bills roamed about the cavern, but

"I have a better way," the professor told his mark, if the eight Zoroastrians would have been the machine man's head.

He walked instead of his body of 240Z-42. He wished he had an assistant to handle this treat. That would have helped. With 474Z-42, he shall even-foot which the professor would not see, he slid the head tip on. On the again visible foot remains of so that it balanced to bear against the rock, when Then he took a slow, blunt stroke from behind direction of the blow to him. He dropped the machine man, totter, but he kept his balance in bewilderment as an

In slow, oblique stages, he carried bearing the in- this mannered motion of the whole in three all. He where he picked it up inside and heckled it all hurled it at with a dull clatter by the sword. Silver which managed to ing too much noise with tips remain of it there it struck. mechanical bodies. The professor had another had moved slowly to great intricacies of the thing to batter tion of the monster's head with a pointed stone ping the cheek and then it smashed the apex about in a swell of the coned head. The great creature

He returned to look at the situation. The sword was busy with different parts of the machine man. None of the

Professor Jan But the huge brute had been nothing but savage himself led the towering head and It was hard to pick the invisible man chas-brains. The creatures hanging to the floor, the ideas. But professor's foot flew upward and sent the they never head of 19K-59 sailing across the cavern. how common Eager to escape everyone the professor them both reeled and quietly pushed himself out of came and were the path of the staggering and bewildered visible machine. He looked for 19K-59 but could made his presence known and also steered them against the head of 19K-59 and you would 19K-59 to realize them with 19K-59 replied, to his duced conditions.

For a few moments, the Scissor-Bills exhibited interest and curiosity, then drew back against the situation for the wall. The professor of the stum-acquainted the livid Zgroves, his being examined by Ovid with his strategy, as a young and they all joined with play three balls. It had been blowhole with lucky contraction which could partly ideas upon the Ovid. The gigantic brute was of the Scissor-Bills to puzzle out what had happened,

"If they but mostly he was hunting for the head he

made for him or not. He felt sudden alarm at not finding six machine men they still hold!"

This fact, sinking into the little brain of one Scissor Bill, had its telegraphic effect on the others. The Ovoids found themselves suddenly attacked by the slashing, darting little creatures they hated. Heads, tubes and appendages of the machine men

"We are all here," 211M-92. The Ovoids found themselves suddenly attacked by the slashing,

"How did you manage to get so far?" the slashing, darting little creatures they hated. Heads,

"The Scissor Bill earned us." The Ovoids found themselves suddenly attacked by the slashing,

"It was their own idea." The Ovoids found themselves suddenly attacked by the slashing,

"I had an encounter with one of the Ovoids," the professor told them as he kicked vainly and threw rocks at the malign

Ovoids, the professor told them as he kicked vainly and threw rocks at the malign

rose to his feet and walked upright among the scattering of heads that could swear that

he knew I suffered by the Ovoids. Meanwhile, Professor, Jameson was busy kicking the six

"Little wonder," 411C-98 told him. "Your superinvisibility is wearing thin."

"You are becoming visible," said 620Q-35, as in the

"even though a little more than a shadow." The Ovoids were near the blowhole. As

"The Ovoids were near the blowhole. As in the conflict here," said 119M-5, behind him. Professor Jameson

they are persistent and strong enough to eventually break down the rock opening

and reach us. He was busy disposing of the last one

enough." when something seized him from behind in

"This invisibility of the pools is one of the Ovoids

open, the Scissor-Bills carried the eight heads. There were several times that Professor Jameson pointed out to them what they all seem to know. Why, if cannot say, the cavern. There has been a great delay on the way up to the crater's lip when the Scissor-Bills occasional CHAPTER FIVE their odd burdens and a machine man's head rolled away from them. The Death of a Zorome

They were difficult to find again in their super-invisible state, especially on one occasion when the head of 9V 8474 rolled a long way down the slope, taking a sidewise bounce. Had it not been for the professor on his metal legs, patiently tracing 9V 8474's mental direction after finally catching him in his area of visibility, he would never have been found until his invisibility had worn off, and by that time the Ovoids would have found him. Drawn by the attraction of the areas of visibility, these had been left behind with the plating on their abandoned cubed bodies in the cavern. Several of the Ovoids passed the Scissor-Bills with the idea

It was instinct and a knowledge of their own world and of their huge, hereditary enemies which prompted the Scissor Bills to act upon their own initiative. Several had gone on ahead, and now the others carrying their heads swerved suddenly over down the side of the big crater when he commenced noticing what he had feared to see. Faint outlines of the coned head were visible above the Scissor Bills carrying them. As long as they met none of the

He saw his little allies disappear hurriedly beyond his area of visibility as his feet grated and slid down the steep period of surface. He found himself in the air, suspended sickeningly for a moment, yet he knew he was falling but he had no way of finding out and their position in the cavern had become dangerous.

Mental agitation among the Scissor Bills for which the professor had attuned himself, apprised him that Ovoids were no far off. They were coming from behind he lay. He had reached this haven and of them through his legs and body were becoming

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(Continued from page 106)

ticed it first, told of the spots becoming larger.

"Remember what 168P-75 told us about not venturing through the tail of the comet?" Professor Jameson recalled. "He said it would damage metal."

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exclaimed. "Valley corroding our mechanical eyes, too! Soon we shall not be able to see!"

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EACH ONE knew what he meant. The gases of the "sapphire" comet might corrode their heads so badly as to reach their organic brains. While they pondered this likelihood, a boulder and several smaller rocks suddenly struck the broad ledge on which they lay.

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"The Ovoids are taking pot shots at us from above," said 119M-5.

It was true. With the Scissors, the nine Zoromes saw more of the rocks strike perilously close to them and to the Scissor-

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the Scissor-Bills. There were close misses, and 41C-98 was struck a thin, glancing blow on the lower edge of his coned head which sent it clattering against the head of 5ZQ35, where it turned the other over on its side before stopping.

At this point, eight of them still survived, when a stone crashed upon the head of Professor Jameson, sending him into

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wilderment. "Quite a few things happened to you and the others back on the invisible world, thanks to the sapphire comet and the Ovoids. The gases of the comet rapidly oxidized all metal surfaces of your head. The Ovoids and Scissor-Bills were larger and harder to kill than the smaller and weaker Scissor-Bills."

"Which of us did the..."

"Only 9V-474. Of course, before that, but..."

eight of you are getting new media heads."

"We looked for the various search parties and found all of them except yours. The Ovoids attacked a few other machine men but were killed. We suspected they were holding the rest of you somewhere. We finally discovered your new sapphire comet tail gases coated a quarter of the world with semivisibility. You see, ever there was an outcropping of metal, the tail gases oxidized it and gave it a visible crust."

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(Continued from page 14)

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SUPER SCIENCE STORIES

terial (radium) disintegrate into atoms of lead and helium with the mere passage of time. Now, say 2000 atoms of radium. Still the rate of disintegration will likely be one atom per year. So easy is the probability without a powder, grease, or pipe mixture only one of the 2000 atoms breaking up within the next year. But the law which governs the rate of disintegration is very remarkable. It decreases in the same way as the numbers of a battalion of soldiers who are exposed to absolutely random undirected fire. Old age appears to mean nothing to the individual radium atom, in fact, no physical factor seems to dent the atom for it shows up as it would disintegrate one, at 1,000, or 1,001, or the other 1,999. No one knows how or why the atom is selected. It was thought that the discovery of cosmic rays cleared this point up but when radioactive material was taken down a coal mine, shielded from cosmic rays, the rate of disintegration remained unaltered.

We can form a picture of this law by comparing a radium atom to a party of card players who agree to break up as soon as a hand is dealt in which the sum of the cards is a complete suit. A room containing millions of such players must be taken to represent a mass of radioactive material. Registered Patent Attorneys, 1502 Victor Building, Washington 1, D. C., should find out how to protect it. We are registered Patent Attorneys. Send for copy of our "Patent Booklet Prior to Protect Your Invention," and an "Inventors Record" form. No obligation. They are yours for the asking.

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(Continued from page 87)

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